

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

100 # 2619-26

National Intelligence Officers

SP - 173/76  
13 October 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director

FROM: National Intelligence Officer for Strategic Programs

SUBJECT: The Soviet Backfire Bomber: A Chronology of CIA's Reanalysis

1. Attached is a chronology of significant occurrences associated with CIA's reassessment of the Backfire's performance. It was assembled using data provided by OWI, OSR, the SALT Support Staff, and [redacted] 25X1 [redacted] as well as my own files. Included in the chronology are (a) the key steps taken by CIA (OWI) in its reanalysis of the aircraft's characteristics and capabilities, (b) the exposure of the results of this reanalysis and other Backfire data to the DCI and various officials and organizations within the Executive Branch, (c) briefings about the Backfire given to Congressional committees and certain staff members, and (d) press accounts dealing with CIA's reassessment of the Backfire.

2. As will be seen in the chronology's first column, the fact and nature of CIA's reanalysis have been open and available within the Intelligence Community since April 1975.

3. You have referred to the Backfire five times in Congressional briefings. All of your briefings predated the completion of CIA's reassessment; in them, the aircraft was addressed in terms of what was said about it in NIE 11-3/8-75. However, key staff members of several Committees were recently briefed on CIA's analysis and findings and were informed about the views of Air Force intelligence.

4. Items appearing in the "Press" column are primarily reflections of statements attributed to anonymous government officials, alleging that intelligence was slanted to support administration policy.

5. Documents relevant to this chronology are available should you need any of them. On [redacted] recommendation, we have attached copies of the press articles because of your particular concern about them. We can find no record, however, of any press coverage of the Aspen Institute conference to which you have referred several times.

25X1

Attachments

T-10.2

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Exempt from general  
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652  
exemption schedule 5D (1), (2), (3)  
Automatically declassified on  
[redacted] impossible to determine

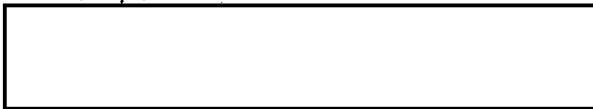
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